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FALLOUT PREDICTIONS COMPUTED FROM SATELLITE DERIVED WINDS.(U)  
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# FALLOUT PREDICTIONS COMPUTED FROM SATELLITE DERIVED WINDS

By

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Louis D./Duncan  
Mary Ann/Seagraves

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## Atmospheric Sciences Laboratory

US Army Electronics Command  
White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico 88002

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20. ABSTRACT (cont)

range of assumed nuclear yields between 100 kilotons and 5 megatons. Thermal winds derived from the satellite data were used at the upper altitude. Tie-on altitudes of 15 and 10 km were used. RMS differences between the predictands derived from the two methods of determining winds yielded values of less than 5 degrees for the radial lines and less than 3 percent for the downrange distance when the 15 km tie-on was used. When the 10 km values were used for tie-on, RMS values for radial line differences varied from 3 to 9.5 degrees, while those for downrange distance varied between 0 and 7.5 percent.



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## INTRODUCTION

The steadily improving capabilities in meteorological satellites, together with innovative techniques for satellite data analysis and interpretation, have provided many new tools and techniques for observing the earth and its atmosphere. This report discusses a specific application of satellite data - the prediction of hazardous areas which could result from the detonation of a nuclear device.\*

During the past 3 decades, considerable research has been expended towards solving the technically complex problems associated with fallout prediction. Approximate techniques which can be used under tactical battlefield conditions have resulted from these research efforts. The current procedures for fallout prediction under tactical conditions are described in FM 3-22, "Fallout Prediction" [1].

The primary meteorological inputs to fallout prediction are the wind data obtained by balloonsonde soundings (usually referred to as radiosondes) of the upper atmosphere made by the US Army Artillery Meteorological Sections. Soundings to at least 30 km altitude are required at 6-hour intervals.

Techniques for inferring the upper altitude wind data from spectral radiance data obtained by satellite borne thermal sounders have been developed and evaluated [2,3]. In brief, these techniques employ the thermal wind equations to complete the upper portions of the wind profile. Radiosonde observations are used for the lower levels and serve as a tie-on for the thermal winds. A tie-on altitude in the neighborhood of 10-15 km altitude is used. In this report the emphasis is placed upon the user product - the actual fallout prediction.

## DISCUSSION

The fallout prediction, as described in FM 3-22, results in the development of a diagram such as the one shown in Fig. 1. To perform the prediction, one must know the wind profiles from the earth's surface to the top of the nuclear cloud and the yield from the blast. The wind profile is used to obtain an effective wind profile which is defined by

$$\vec{V}_e(Z) = \int_0^Z f(\zeta) \vec{W}(\zeta) d\zeta$$

where  $\vec{W}(\zeta)$  and  $\vec{V}_e(Z)$  are the actual and effective wind profiles, respectively, the  $f(\zeta)$  is the weighting function which is obtained from the fall rate of the radioactive debris particles.

\*Currently operational Army techniques for fallout prediction were employed in this study. Meteorological satellite data were used to obtain atmospheric inputs required for the predictions.

The principal predictands required for the construction of Fig. 1 are the downrange distance and the right and left radial lines. The downrange distance,  $R$ , is obtained from the formula

$$R = AY^{2/5} V^{1/2}$$

where  $Y$  is the nuclear yield,  $V$  is the effective windspeed at the bottom of the cloud, and  $A$  is a proportionality constant. The radial lines are obtained from the direction of the effective wind at the top of the nuclear cloud and at the two-thirds stem height. If these two directions are separated by at least 40 degrees, they are taken as the radial lines; otherwise, the average of these directions is computed and the radial lines are determined by adding and subtracting 20 degrees.

For a specified yield the fallout prediction becomes a function of the effective windspeed at the cloud bottom height and the effective wind directions at the cloud top height and the 2/3 stem height. These three heights are shown in Fig. 2 as a function of yield.

#### COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Theoretical estimation of the absolute accuracies of the fallout prediction computed from satellite derived winds appears virtually untenable at this time because of dependency upon several sources of errors. The more practical approach is through statistical comparison with predictions computed from other wind measurement systems. The radiosonde system was selected as a standard for comparison because this is the current method for obtaining upper altitude wind data for most applications and data from this system is readily obtainable. However, it is important to point out that rather large errors are often inherent in such measurements, especially during high wind conditions [4].

A special data collection was begun at White Sands Missile Range (WSMR), NM, in February 1975 to obtain a sample of radiosonde data for comparison with NOAA 4 and 5 satellite data. Radiosonde balloons were released approximately 1 hour before the satellite passover in order to minimize errors due to temporal variability. (Approximately 100 minutes is required for balloon rise to 30 km altitude.) Data extending through February 1977 were used for this study, which resulted in a sample size of 60 cases. The following pressure layers were selected for computation of thermal winds from the satellite sounder data: 10-20, 20-40, 40-80, 80-150, and 150-300 mbs. Corresponding altitudes for the boundaries of these layers are approximately 31, 26.5, 22, 17.4, 13.8, and 9.4 km. In 28 of the samples, radiosonde data were not available for the 10-20 mb layer because the balloon burst before the top of the layer; eight samples were unavailable for the 20-40 mb layer for the same reason.



## RESULTS

Fallout predictions were computed for the 60 comparative samples discussed in the previous section and for yields of 100, 250, 500, 750, 1000, 2500, and 5000 kilotons. Yields less than 100 kilotons were not considered because the results for the 100 kiloton case indicates very good comparisons, and it is rather evident that computations for smaller yields would result in even smaller differences between the two sets of comparisons.

Two separate sets of comparisons were performed. The first case used 15 km as the tie-on altitudes for the satellite data while 10 km was used as tie-on in the second case. The root mean square (rms) was used as the measure of the difference between the predictions obtained from the comparisons. Results are shown in Table 1 and 2.\* For completeness, the altitudes for the cloud top, the cloud bottom, and two-thirds stem height are included.

The downrange distance, R, varies considerably from case to case because of the variation in effective windspeed. For this reason it was decided that rms values of percent differences would be a more meaningful measure for the comparison. Since this value will be zero for yields having cloud bottom heights below the tie-on altitude, the tables include listings only for the appropriate yields.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results shown in Table 1 demonstrate the capability of the satellite derived winds to provide reliable fallout predictions even for nuclear yields in the megaton range. The rms values are for differences between the predictands computed from radiosonde alone and predictands using radiosonde data below 15 km with satellite derived thermal winds used to complete the profile. As such, it must be remembered that these rms values represent errors from two sources - the errors in the radiosonde wind measurements and the errors in the winds derived from the satellite data. Although these errors cannot be separated at this time, it is well known that the radiosonde measurements can contain significant errors and this leads to the obvious conclusion that the prediction errors attributed to the satellite data are surely less than the rms values shown. As expected, the rms values shown in Table 2 for the 10 km tie-on are larger than those shown in Table 1. Still these values are relatively small and indicate that the satellite data with this tie-on can provide usable predictions.

\*It should be noted that for 2/3 stem heights less than the tie-on altitude, the direction of the effective wind will be the same for both techniques. However, because of the adjustment of 40° separation, a nonzero rms difference for the radial corresponding to the 2/3 stem height is possible.

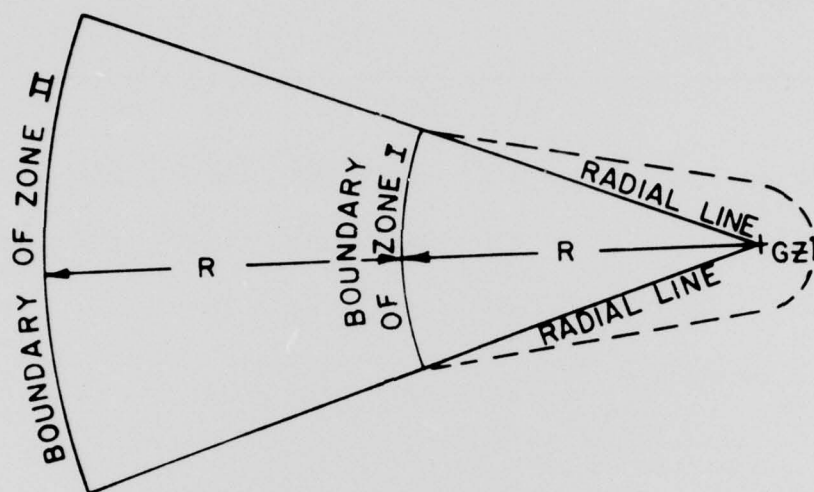


Figure 1. Fallout prediction diagram.

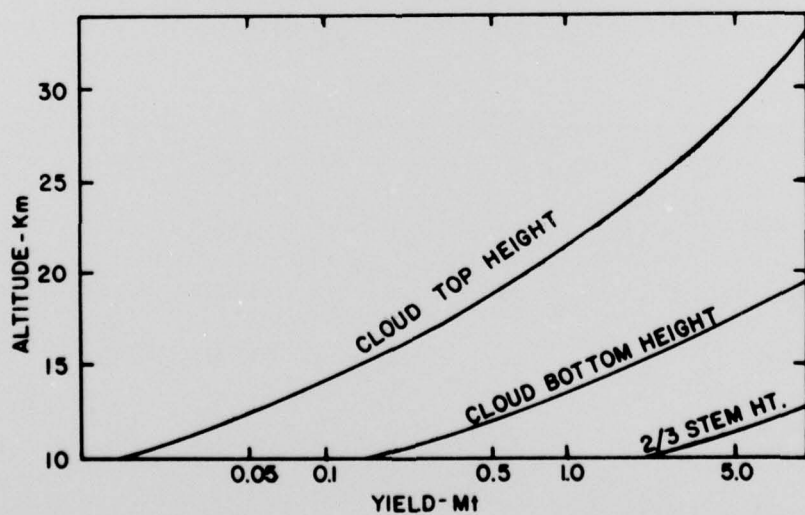


Figure 2. Nuclear cloud height parameters.

TABLE 1. COMPARISON OF PREDICTIONS FROM RADIOSONDE TO SATELLITE DATA, 15 KM TIE-ON ALTITUDE

Yield (kt)	100	250	500	750	1000	2500	5000
Cloud Top Height (km)	14.3	16.4	19.1	20.7	21.8	25.5	28.9
Cloud Bottom Height (km)	9.3	10.7	12.1	12.8	13.4	15.4	17.3
2/3 Stem Height	6.2	7.2	8.1	8.6	8.9	10.3	11.5
RMS Difference in Radial Line to Cloud Top (deg)	0	1.0	2.8	3.4	4.5	4.3	5.6
RMS Difference in Radial Line to 2/3 Stem Height (deg)	0	0.7	1.7	2.1	2.4	4.2	4.8
RMS Percent Difference in Downrange Distance	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	2.8

TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF PREDICTIONS FROM RADIOSONDE AND SATELLITE DATA, 10 KM TIE-ON ALTITUDE

Yield (kt)	100	250	500	750	1000	2500	5000
Cloud Top Height (km)	14.3	16.4	19.1	20.7	21.8	25.5	28.9
Cloud Bottom Height (km)	9.3	10.7	12.1	12.8	13.4	15.4	17.3
2/3 Stem Height (km)	6.2	7.2	8.1	8.6	8.9	10.3	11.5
RMS Difference in Radial Line to Cloud Top (deg)	3.3	4.3	5.6	6.6	7.1	8.6	9.5
RMS Difference in Radial Line to Cloud Bottom (deg)	2.9	3.9	5.0	5.7	6.5	8.3	9.4
RMS Percent Difference in Downrange Distance, R	0	2.6	5.7	6.2	6.4	6.8	7.5

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